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# DESIGN

*A monthly journal for manufacturers and designers*



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Design policy begins at the top

Glassware from the 1951 Stock List

Official lettering gives a lead



COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

NUMBER 14 : FEBRUARY 1950

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS



## DO WIVES TALK T.I.?

What do wives talk about? Their children, clothes, husbands? . . . naturally. Their homes? . . . inevitably. At this very moment housewives all over the country are talking TI. That new electric cooker may well be the theme — or the car, which almost certainly owes much to TI. Bicycles? . . . a TI speciality, as are paints, water-heaters, electric irons and fires. And then there are all the important things which depend wholly or partly upon TI products, like aluminium utensils, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, step ladders, garden implements, toys . . . Yes, wives should know TI.

*The letters TI mean Tube Investments Limited, of The Adelphi, London, W.C.2 (Temple Bar 0271). They also stand for the 30 producing companies of the co-ordinated TI group, makers of precision tubes, of bicycles and components, of wrought aluminium alloys, electrical appliances, pressure vessels, paints, road signs, metal furniture . . . and essential mechanical parts for a thousand and one things which everybody uses.*



**THE SURNAME OF A THOUSAND THINGS**

# DESIGN

*A monthly journal for manufacturers and designers*

ISSUED BY THE COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN AND THE SCOTTISH COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL

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*The cover illustration shows some recent examples of design in technical and business printing*

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## LEADERSHIP OR FOLLOWSHIP?

THERE IS NO greater temptation when discussing design than to dismiss the whole subject as a matter of taste and to pass on to the next topic before feelings get hurt. There is, moreover, enough truth in this line of least resistance to support some solid commercial arguments. Indeed, we suspect that certain successful American designers are today exploiting this element of truth to the entire satisfaction of their clients, for we read in the introduction to the new volume *U.S. Industrial Design '49-'50* that the industrial designer today "is an intermediary who interprets the public to his client" and further on we learn that the method employed in the redesign programme for an electric toaster, for instance, was consumer testing of each design proposal until the "acceptance rating" of the final design was 50 per cent above the best competitor.

Now it is no part of our purpose to belittle commercial success. We agreed profoundly with Robert Heller, the American designer who lectured in England last month, when he said: "If it doesn't sell, it's not good industrial design." But it is no part of our job to agree that the lowest common denominator of public taste is *ipso facto* good design.

That might have been a tenable proposition when public taste was jealous of good workmanship and the craftsman's pride improved the humblest object. Today the chances are that a consumer acceptance rating will have no more to do with aesthetic merit than the word *styled* has to do with *style*. The

standard of design achieved by such polling of public opinion will be no higher than the taste of the public polled.

It is obvious, too, that a manufacturer who adopts a policy of design followship will be at the mercy of any competitor who takes the course of design leadership backed by substantial promotion. In this respect we are again in complete agreement with our American friends who tell us that design, whether good or bad, must be *sold*. It is useless to spend time and money on new designs from the factories if the salesmen are not convinced of their worth and if the public is not persuaded to vouchsafe that consumer acceptance without which production must come to a full stop.

It is equally dangerous to ignore the basic and characteristic tastes of any market. When Americans deride "the dark brown taste of the British," we should review at once the colours we offer for export to the USA. When an experienced American marketing consultant says that "even the lowest element in the US has a complete revulsion to your modernist tiled fireplaces," all exporters should re-examine their products for traces of the same infection. It is common-sense to have this much regard for public opinion—but if a designer or manufacturer puts his ear much closer to the ground, he may find himself listening to the opinions of the American lady who thought that a Louis XVI bed was two sizes larger than a Louis XIV. P. R.

# PRINTING DESIGN

## and the print user

Good design in business printing means something more than the occasional commissioning of booklet covers or poster designs by Famous Artists: it implies a consistent design policy—reflected in all forms of printed matter from price lists to packing slips

by Alec Davis

DESIGN IN PRINTING concerns the print user as well as the printer. The manufacturer, who uses various kinds of printed matter in his daily work, is well aware that improvement in their design will not solve his labour problems nor halve his production costs, nor will it immediately send his sales-curve rocketing skyward. But it would be wrong to dismiss good design in printing as a purely aesthetic ideal, wholly lacking in commercial value.

The importance of good design in printed advertising is a well-worn topic which need not be enlarged upon here: obviously, no advertisement will achieve its purpose if the impression it makes on the reader is unfavourable. But it is important to realise that a firm's customers see, also, a wide range of printed matter that is not directly concerned with advertising or sales promotion—letterheads, compliment slips, invoices and statements, envelopes, address labels, visiting cards; even such small and generally neglected pieces of print as delivery notes and packing slips. All these help to give an impression of the firm that uses them; if they are untidy, old-fashioned or jazziily modernistic, the impression will be unfavourable. Well-designed print, on the other hand, suggests that the manufacturer takes a justifiable pride in his business and its products—and that pride quickly communicates itself to the reader.

Printed matter intended for use within the firm, unseen by its customers, can still benefit from being well designed. If you must have forms—and in a firm of any size today, you must—they can at least be well-designed forms, which are easily read and

easy to fill in. Cable & Wireless Ltd commissioned one of the best-known living typographers to redesign, logically and harmoniously, all the forms used in their business: which suggests that smaller users of forms might also find it worth while to give this subject their attention. Work sheets, job tickets, inter-office memorandum forms can increase the efficiency of a business, to a small but by no means negligible degree, if they are themselves efficiently laid-out.

In business printing, good design need cost no more than bad. Indeed, it will often *reduce* costs because it involves a measure of simplification—redesigning a label to print in two colours where seven were used before, or standardising the colour scheme for a manufacturer's whole range of print, instead of having a variety of items that necessitate short runs in different colours. In America, the redesign of the vast range of printed packaging material for Armour food products is said to have saved enough money on the first year's print-orders to pay the consultant designer's fee; and in Britain a designer of wide experience has claimed that the rationalisation of printing costs through redesign has effected consistent economies, in some cases amounting to 60 per cent of the original expenditure.

The design of a firm's printed matter *as a whole* is not only desirable for the economies which it makes possible, but, even more, because it helps to establish a house style. The value of this has been widely realised in recent years in printed packaging: successful manufacturers of many products from beauty preparations to Sheffield steel tools have given



a family resemblance to their packs—for example, using similar lettering throughout, with different colours to identify different items in the range. When they are thus planned as a whole, they quickly become identified with the manufacturer who uses them and so serve as “reminder advertising” for all his products.

There is no reason why other kinds of commercial printing cannot be treated in the same way. Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Co can be mentioned as one of several firms who have adopted a uniform page-size and the same family of type-faces for all their leaflets, with differentiation by means of colour. The familiar GPO telephone directories are also notable in this context. The principle applies equally to business stationery. It is only common sense to have large and small letterheads designed in the same style, but many firms miss the opportunity to carry the style through their other stationery.

In those firms whose printed matter is consistently of a high standard of design, there is almost always an overall design policy which is equally evident in non-printed matter: ideally, the two are planned side by side. The possibility of developing a likeness between letterheads and, say, machine tools or biscuits

or razor-blades may not be immediately obvious, but these diverse manufactured goods (and most others) carry some form of wording. Whether it is a brief brand-name or a panel of lengthy instructions for use, and by whatever process it is reproduced, its presentation can be either a credit or a discredit to the user; often it can be based on a good type-face which is used in the firm's printed matter. There are plenty of examples of this theory successfully applied in practice: in the famous Johnston Sanserif of London Transport stations and signs and timetables, the sloped Cyclone capitals of BOAC, and—among strictly commercial concerns—in the Albertus type-face used by Sainsbury's in packaging, catalogue and advertisement headings, and van-painting, as well as the showcards which enliven the windows of their multiple provision-stores.

It may be useful here to reconsider the factors on which good design in lettering depends—whether that lettering is type-set or engraved or hand-drawn. These factors are two, separate and distinct; one, the design of the letter-forms themselves; two, their arrangement in relation to one another and to the surface on which they are printed. The second

*continued overleaf*

*Not only on their aircraft and road vehicles, but in display material and printed matter, the initials of British Overseas Airways Corporation are made easily recognisable by the Corporation's consistent use of one type-face (Cyclone: designed and produced for Fanfare Press under the supervision of Ernest Ingham). Below, the combined British Airways' stand at the 1949 BIF (designed by W. M. de Majo: assistant, H. L. Collis) is shown alongside typical BOAC booklets, stationery and a new luggage label*



*continued*

factor is scarcely less important than the first, for the same type-face, used in two different styles of layout, will look very different.

Generally, the first aim of type design and of typographical layout is legibility. Although letters may make delightful patterns of black on white, they still fail in their purpose if they cannot be easily read. Legibility is itself a more complex quality than might at first appear; certainly it is something different from mere visibility. The letters on an optician's sight-testing card are readily visible, but they would be almost unreadable for the text of a novel or a newspaper article, and far from ideal for a letterhead or a price-list.

Besides legibility, appropriateness to subject-matter and to surroundings is desirable in all forms of typographical design; and this quality, too, depends as much on the way the type is used as on

the type-face itself. In other words, the design of printed matter is skilled work. Joseph Gould wrote in *The Letterpress Printer*: "Job printing includes an infinite variety of every description of work, in most of which the compositor is called upon to exercise his skill or taste, by displaying and arranging lines so that, according to the class of job, they shall appear bold and effective or artistic and neat. . . ." But that was in 1888. The need for "skill or taste" (or both together) still exists today, but we no longer leave everything to the compositor; modern conditions have brought into being a new kind of skilled man, the professional typographer, who may or may not have been trained as a comp. in his early days.

The typographer's emergence is due mainly to advertising agents (and, outside the field of business printing, to book publishers). Today he may work in an agency, in a manufacturer's advertising department, as a consultant, or at a printing works. The master printers and the printing trade unions, which should have encouraged the typographer from the start, have been slow to realise his usefulness, but the realisation is spreading. Printing, the first of



**it's the  
★  
super!**

IT'S the brush made for professionals by craftsmen—in one of the largest and most modern paint brush factories in the country. So you can expect a great deal of good work out of it.

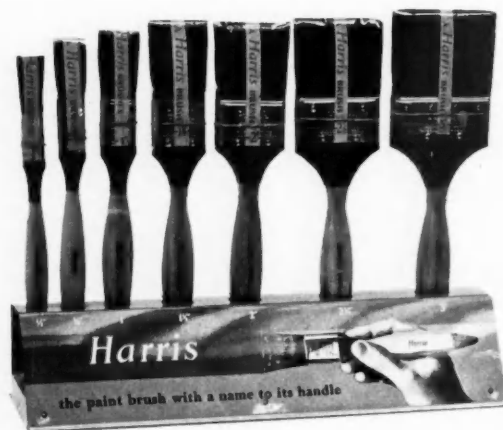
The double thickness of pure bristle is locked in vulcanised rubber by a special process; the ferrule is of nickel plated steel; the handle has been specially designed in a heavier tail shape for extra comfort and ease of handling. Feel the balance and you'll agree this brush is really exceptional. We can deliver from stock.

**Harris SUPER**

Made by the makers of Harris  
—the paint brush with a name to its handle

L. G. HARRIS & CO LTD • STOKE PRIOR • WORCESTERSHIRE • ENGLAND

MADE IN ENGLAND



The Harris paint brush displays the "name to its handle" in good typographic style. In press advertisements (as on left: agents, C. R. Casson Ltd) the name Harris is type-set in Perpetua italic; elsewhere, a hand-lettered version, in which the strokes are thickened without losing the essential characteristics of Perpetua, is employed. Above, this slightly thickened version is seen silk-screened on the side of the display unit, stamped into the wood of the brush-handles, and printed on transparent film wrappers which protect the bristles. It is also stamped—out of sight in this picture—on the metal parts of the brushes. All Harris products and publicity material acquire a "family resemblance" from their uniform style of lettering

Recently there has been significant activity at the managerial level. During the present winter, the Printers' Managers and Overseers Association has been holding a series of 12 lectures on design in relation to printing—and, specifically, in relation to printing *management*. This article could have no more appropriate ending than a quotation from one of the lectures, by Vivian Ridler of the Oxford University Press. The emphasis in the compositor's training, said Mr Ridler, is technical; "and this technical training does not automatically turn him into a good typographer. Nevertheless it is to the aspiring craftsman that the trade . . . should properly turn, and here of course the responsibility of management is considerable. The management must make it clear that in their business good design matters as much as good technical quality—in other words there must be the right atmosphere to allow, if not to encourage, good work to be done."



*New (above) and old  
leaflets for Marconi  
rectifying valves*



An ambitious scheme of printing redesign has been undertaken for Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Co Ltd by London Typographical Designers Ltd: photograph above gives some indication of its scope. The heart of the scheme is a range of leaflets printed in different colours to identify different types of equipment—e.g., claret for wireless transmitter leaflets, brown-green for receivers. Text types are of the Times Roman family, with brand-name in Caslon italic

# PLANNING THE CATALOGUE

The catalogue has a twofold task: to give the buyer the information he needs, and to present it in a way that arouses his interest in the goods advertised

by C. W. Cousland \*

NEVER WAS IT MORE desirable that British catalogues—British export catalogues especially—should be good. And a good catalogue, it must be remembered, has to perform two main functions: (a) to present information, (b) to create a desire for the goods. To achieve the first aim, the text must be legible and the pictures clear and easily understood. The second demands something more—the elusive quality of attractiveness. In catalogues intended for the public, this is relatively more important than in catalogues for the trade or for the technically minded buyer of capital goods; but, however technical the subject, an attractive and contemporary appearance is invaluable.

An ounce of illustration is worth a pound and a half of sales talk. Pictures should be clear and detailed. Half-tone blocks from lightly retouched or unretouched photographs carry conviction and can be

used to advantage for most products. Good line drawings are, however, better than bad half-tones, heavily retouched and muddily printed: these should be avoided at all costs.

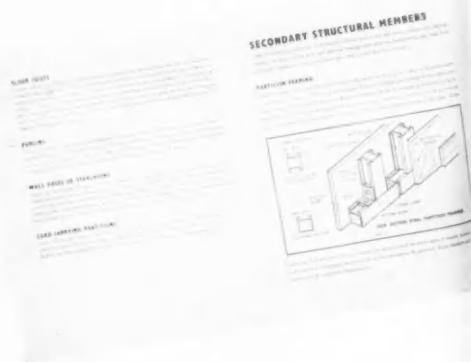
Whatever the technique employed—photography, wash or line—illustrations must illustrate. Tool-kits and spares, for example, should be carefully numbered and illustrated *open*, so that every item can be seen and identified. A buyer 3,000 miles away cannot ring up and ask what is in the tool-kit, but if he sees that it covers his likely needs, he will have far more confidence in ordering the machine which it accompanies.

If it is considered impracticable to print separate editions of catalogues with text in the language of each country for which they are intended (and this is obviously the most desirable course), there should be a summary in that language, even if economy demands that it be printed separately and tipped-in on, say,

\* Printing & Packaging Officer, Council of Industrial Design



*Text in the language of the country is always desirable*



*Good line-drawings are better than bad halftones*

the inside front cover. A possible but less satisfactory alternative is to print one's catalogue in English and French throughout. It is over-optimistic to suppose that every reader will understand either of these languages, but the inclusion of French will at least make the catalogue more widely understandable than if it were printed in English alone.

However brilliant the typographical design of a catalogue, its usefulness must depend on its contents. The information it gives must be selected with the user's needs in mind. Sizes and weights should be converted to the metric system and printed alongside the British equivalent, in all advertising matter which is to be used abroad. This may read like gratuitous advice but unfortunately it is still necessary: as has just been pointed out by a large European manufacturer of heating installations. "We just can't spare the time to convert feet and inches, pounds and tons into metric equivalents," he wrote. "Your makers keep on sending us catalogues in English, without prices and without mentioning delivery times. Frankly, we are beginning to look about for other suppliers, and German makers with catalogues in French and the fullest technical details, in a system we understand, are already regaining old customers."

Wherever possible, prices should be quoted in the currency of the country. American or Canadian firms find it difficult to convert pounds and shillings, with quantity discounts and perhaps a 15 per cent increase and f.o.b. London, into dollars and cents, including carriage to their front doors. If changing costs make it unwise to include the information they want in the main body of the catalogue, a leaflet

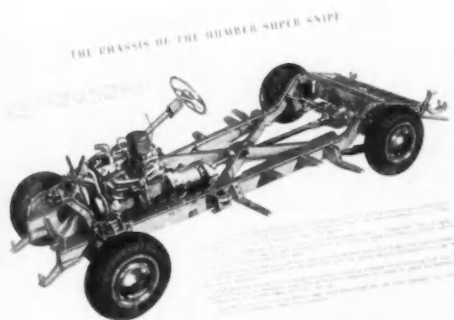
separately printed with current prices in dollars, showing extra for carriage to the chief overseas ports, can well be inserted at Page 1. Failing all else, a letter accompanying the catalogue should quote prices including packing and carriage to the customer's unloading bay.

If catalogues and booklets are well designed, they are more likely to be favourably reviewed in the trade and technical Press of overseas countries—a secondary but not an unimportant consideration, since press notices can form a valuable recommendation to readers in a new market.

Firms in North and South America, especially, are accustomed to receive beautifully produced and printed catalogues, very frequently, from their manufacturers. There is a tendency to standardise their size and, for ease of filing as well as other reasons, British firms would be well advised to choose one size for all their advertising matter, and stick to it. Sizes much used in the United States and Canada are 11 x 8½ in. and 10 x 8 in.

This country has a great—and growing—reputation for book-production. Economically, it is important that our commercial printing—catalogues, booklets and brochures—should be raised to the same high standard of design.

The pages illustrated below, left to right, are from catalogues designed by T. Booth Waddicor & Partners Ltd for Roneo office furniture; printed by Curwen Press for T.I. (Export) Ltd metal sections; printed by Lund Humphries for Humber cars (illustration: four-colour halftone from wash drawing); designed by Cecil D. Notley Advertising Ltd and printed by Alabaster Passmore & Sons Ltd for Chance Bros light-house equipment



*Pictures of mechanical products should show details clearly*



*However technical the subject, good layout commands attention*



## DESIGN POLICY BEGINS AT THE TOP

The emphasis is on the design-education of management in this progressive Italian firm—which does not rely upon any particular invention but “on the refinement of known forms”

by Mark Hartland Thomas, MA, FRIBA, MSIA \*

THE FIRM OF Olivetti is remarkable not so much for the good design of the principal product, typewriters, but for the high standard of design throughout the things that Olivetti's use in their business, as well as their products. Indeed, their consistent *design policy* is no doubt the reason for the high standard of the products.

The establishment of such a design policy in a big firm is not easy, but is probably the only way to ensure the production of goods of consistently high quality. You may sometimes get good things from a bad factory, but this is a fortunate chance that cannot be relied upon. Britain, like Italy, must rely upon high standards of quality for economic health and we can only expect good design to breed true to itself.

At the Council we receive enquiries from firms wishing to improve their standards and asking for

advice. The most important thing is to place responsibility for design as high as possible in the hierarchy of the firm's organisation. As Adriano Olivetti, the President of his firm, remarked, “If top executive does not understand, we are lost.” In Olivetti's, he carries the responsibility himself—right at the very top.

But when it is suggested to him that it all depends upon his own personal influence, and the tradition from his father, he demurs that much is also due to balance and to destiny. We cannot explain what he means by “destiny,” but the factor of “balance” can be elucidated a little. When he interviews candidates for engineering appointments, he asks them more questions about the humanities than about their engineering degrees. That policy maintained over two generations has ensured a balance of understanding in the staff. Another instance of “balance” is the complete freedom of access, horizontally and vertically, between all members of the staff. If any member has a suggestion or criticism to make he goes straight to the man concerned, even to the President himself, without getting lost in the creaking machinery of departmental responsibility.

These examples give something of the flavour of the place, which it is necessary to realise because on paper the organisation is quite ordinary. There are three general managers reporting to the President: administration under Mr Pero; all experimental and manufacturing departments under the Technical General Manager, Mr Beccio; and all advertising and sales departments under Mr Henriques, the Commercial General Manager. Important design aspects are



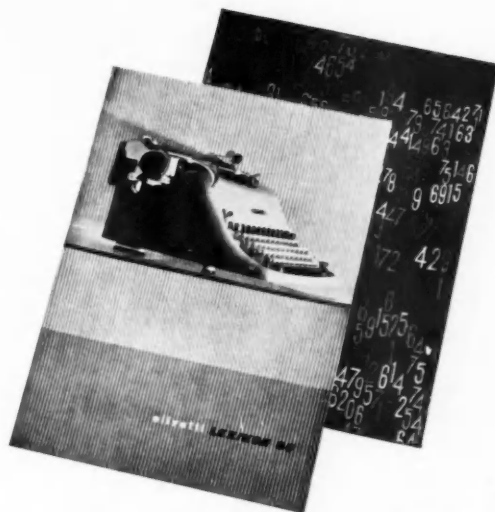
Grinding machine. Much of the Olivetti plant is of the firm's own design and construction

\* Chief Industrial Officer, Council of Industrial Design

handled by the General Managers: Olivetti's do not, like some firms with a progressive design policy, carry a Design Director who is responsible for the consistency of design both in the sales literature and in the product, as well as in the buildings and factory environment. The Olivetti tradition of high standards to aim at and mutual consultation within the company make such an appointment unnecessary. But the present healthy state is the result of a persistent policy of design education of management from the General Managers downwards. Adriano Olivetti is emphatic that, whilst good design is a function of the balance between art and engineering, it is the administrator who must co-ordinate the two: therefore the education of management in artistic values, at present completely overlooked in the business schools, is the critical problem. "An artist needs continuous support from the executive, or the engineers will *unknowingly* spoil his work." The reverse would also, no doubt, be true if ever we put an engineering department in charge of an artist.

The emphasis is upon the education of management. Industrialists of Olivetti's knowledge and critical appreciation of design are very rare. Whilst it is undoubtedly the responsibility of top management to see that design policy is undertaken and maintained, there are few managing directors capable of administering such a policy unaided.

The design policy at Olivetti's is all the more remarkable because this firm does not rely upon any



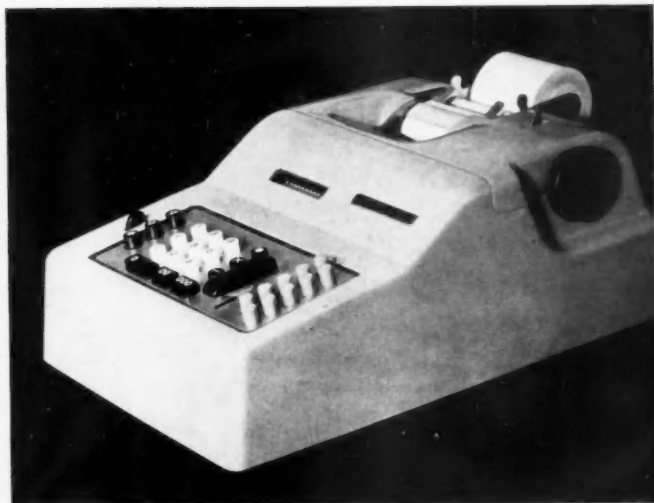
Leaflets for the Lexikon 80 typewriter (DESIGN No 7, page 9) and an adding machine

particular invention nor upon the cultivation of originality to carry it forward. Their line is the refinement of known forms to bring them as near as possible to perfection. Take, for example, the newest Olivetti product, the electric typewriter derived from the *Lexikon 80*, which will be on the market shortly. The programme was *simplification*: one or two refinements were achieved in the process

*continued overleaf*



Developed from the Lexikon 80: a new electric typewriter



The Multisumma 14 electric printing calculating-machine



*Olivetti's speciality "is a refinement of known forms to bring them as near as possible to perfection"*

## DESIGN POLICY BEGINS AT THE TOP *continued*

of simplification, but there was no revolutionary change in the accepted design of a typewriter. Since the nineteenth century, parts had been continually added to typewriter mechanisms until repair and maintenance had become too complicated. The need for a return to simplicity, already felt and achieved in the design of the standard typewriter, gave a tremendous advantage to the designer when detailing the new electric typewriter. The general form was fixed on classical typewriter lines by the disposition of the mechanism and then the case was designed by the firm's consultant, Professor Marcello Nizzoli, in collaboration with Mr Beccio, the Technical General Manager. The exquisite shape achieved is a sure sign of close attention to design all through the mechanism. The pale French grey colour is in line with modern opinion upon the avoidance of brightness of contrast between writing paper and its background. (All the office desks at Olivetti's have pale grey or buff tops.)

Perhaps this small case-history of Olivetti's typewriter is characteristic of our times. There are signs in a number of places that we may be entering upon a new "classic" age in which the refinement of known forms is more important than the invention of new ones.



*Open or closed, this movable filing cabinet shows attention to detail in large and small points of design*

type-  
signs  
upon  
nown  
f new

Consuntivo di costo		DA FATTURARE
PARTI RICAM - BUONO N _____ L _____		
PARTI RICAM - BUONO N _____ L _____		L _____
ACCESSORI - BUONO N _____ L _____		L _____
N _____ ore manodopera _____ L _____		L _____
Spese viaggio e trasferta _____ L _____		L _____
	L _____	L _____
<b>Totale L. _____</b>		<b>L. _____</b>
<b>Non fatturate perché in:</b>	Firma del compilatore	<b>Emessa fattura</b>
		N _____

<b>OLIVETTI</b>		<b>CHIAMATA</b>	
SERVIZIO TECNICO ASSISTENZA CLIENTI MACCHINE CONTABILI E ADDIZIONATRICI			
Zona	Mese	Anni	Mater. - Fam.
Cliente			
Motore della chiamata			
Macchine		Matricella	
<b>CONTROLLATE IL LAVORO ESEGUITO</b>			
Pezzi sostituiti	N	Nome di catalogo	Simbolo
Numero registrazione		Data      ora      del Timbro e firma del Cliente	

Originale per la Fiscale

*In their clean, simple lines, these buses at the Olivetti factory reflect the firm's consistent design policy*

## Official lettering gives a lead

In every factory, every department store and every large block of offices, there is a problem of signpost design. This article shows how the Ministry of Works tackles similar problems

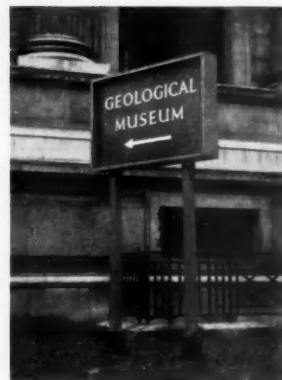
by C. G. Tomrley \*

THE QUESTION WHETHER a Government department should lead or follow public taste in matters of style does not seem to have caused the Ministry of Works to falter at any time in the last 20 years with its policy for official lettering. The Architects' Department has made the lettering for which it is responsible as good as it knew how, following with a sensitive understanding the best available examples. The effect has been one of leadership, the more effective, perhaps, because not consciously propagandist.

The Ministry is responsible for a great deal of lettering. The list of buildings erected, converted, leased and maintained by it is a long one, ranging from palaces to shelters, and all the lettering used upon and inside them is designed and controlled by the Ministry's Chief Architect's Department. In addition there are the royal parks, the scheduled ancient monuments, and the buildings and precincts of many other Ministries who call on the services of Works.



*Directness, simplicity and good proportion distinguish the two painted direction signs, on this page, which stand in the open between the Geological Museum and the Science Museum in South Kensington. The lettering is in gold on a dark blue ground, with a frame of lighter blue. Executed by the Maintenance Division of the Ministry of Works*



Everyone is familiar with the varnished printed notice with the acorn border used in parks, and with the standard bronze tablets in post offices, to mention only two examples impinging on the daily life of the public.

The Ministry's concern for high quality in signs and notices dates from the time when, in the 1920's, Sir Richard J. Alison, CBE, FRIBA, was their chief architect. Sir Richard was followed on his retirement in the 1930's by Sir James Grey West, MBE, FRIBA, who upheld the standards of his predecessor. Two officers of their department continuously made lettering their care throughout the entire period. One, C. Tunstall Small, recently retired from the Department of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings; his colleague, C. Terry Pledge, ARIBA, is fortunately still in office under the present chief architect, W. A. Rutter, CBE, FRIBA.

To these officers goes the credit for setting a standard of lettering and for preserving it. They have had their eye upon all the significant work of the great contemporary letter-designers who, with their origins in the arts and crafts movement associated with William Morris, have nevertheless had a profound and direct influence on the printing industry, and on commercial lettering wherever used.

As most of the Ministry's lettering is of an inscrip-tional kind, it is natural that its exponents should have followed with particular interest the formal and monumental inscriptions designed and often executed by the great lettering craftsmen. Whereas men like Eric Gill and Percy Delf Smith worked mainly in permanent materials such as hardwood, stone, slate and metal, and cut their letters, the Ministry's day-to-day work is usually painted, although other techniques are used. The illustrations to this article are only a very small selection from a field so large that

\* Design Advice Section, Council of Industrial Design.





Memorial inscriptions for British ministers and officials overseas come within the province of the Ministry of Works. The example illustrated above—in Cairo Cathedral—is incised in silver-bronze; designed by C. Terry Pledge, ARIBA

any attempt to do more than represent a few kinds of official sign and notice would have involved an embarrassing choice among excellences.

The Ministry has a large team of architects, and, as an offshoot of the architects' department, a section consisting of maintenance surveyors, both at headquarters and at regional offices. All the responsible officers in these sections possess a set of standard letters and numerals, supplemented by a chart of letter-structure derived directly from the lettering on the Trajan Column. This is for routine work. When an important notice is planned, a full-size detail drawing is produced by one of the Ministry's specialists, usually an architect, who may use more suitable or more interesting but still characteristic variants of the basic letters of the chart. One of a selected group of tendering sign-contractors executes the final board, which must be a faithful reproduction of the drawing. Contractors in this group, who are by now accustomed to the standard required, may work to instructions less precise than an accurate drawing where a simple sign is concerned, but the letter-character and prescribed spacing are nevertheless maintained with care by all parties concerned.

Although for the most formal work pure Roman  
*continued overleaf*



This elegant and readable painted board, with its pale blue, red and white lettering on an unvarnished oak background, fits its dignified purpose well. The balance of capitals and lower case letters is noteworthy. Designed by C. Tunstall Small

*continued*

letters are favoured, several modifications are used elsewhere.

The Ministry's media are many and increasing. The largest number of notices for various Ministries are painted on prepared wooden boards. More permanent and more architectural in character are the bronze plaques, more often seen in post offices. Of late, plastic signs have begun to be introduced for small work. The parks frequently use printed notices, lacquered to render the paper weatherproof. In a different class are the memorial inscriptions and

rolls of honour designed by the Ministry's specialists, mainly for overseas; and, last but not least, there are carved or enamelled name-letters on buildings, treated as part of the architectural design.

The lettering for which the Ministry is responsible thus ranges from the formal single specimen, which offers scope by reason of its monumental character for the artists among the Ministry's letterers, to the unassuming direction sign or information board. That the latter should have received consistent care over a diverse and widespread scene is a matter on which the public may congratulate itself. In the signwriting field, the influence of the Ministry of Works has made its mark.

## Signs of public interest

THAT PUBLIC LETTERING is a matter of public interest is now evident in Cambridge if nowhere else. The appearance of new street nameplates led to a protest against the shape and spacing of their sans serif capitals from the University Printer, which was followed by debate in the Town Council and discussion in the *Cambridge Daily News*.

When Cambridge was shown, as an alternative, an alphabet designed by David Kindersley, stone carver and letterer, the Council decided that the opportunity to use it had come too late: but local newspaper correspondence clearly showed the weight of public opinion in favour of Mr Kindersley's signs. This quotation from a letter written by George Stevenson, head of Cambridge School of Art, is typical of many comments: "In the matter of amenities Cambridge should pride itself on setting enlightened standards . . . Mr Kindersley is undoubtedly one of the foremost designers of inscriptional lettering in this country, and . . . in rejecting his advice and designs they [the Town Council] have made a great mistake."

His alphabet has been designed specifically for casting in aluminium; the limitations of the process determine the shape of junctions of strokes—which are slightly rounded instead of being angular; while the production method and the need for legibility at a distance both influenced his decision to depart in some details from traditional Roman letter-forms. Mr Kindersley has also developed a system of letter-spacing which can be applied by untrained operatives. It depends on the provision, for four letters out of the 26, of alternatives cast on wide and narrow spaces: two wide or two narrow are never used together.



To street nameplates of "block" letters, badly spaced, David Kindersley's designs offer an alternative that is legible even when seen obliquely, as below



## New welding process offers new scope for design

*A new process which is less complex than old ones is a novelty indeed. In the USA it has been estimated that the adoption of this new British technique will cut the cost of certain manufacturing methods by 30 per cent, largely owing to the simplicity of the tools employed.*

EDITOR

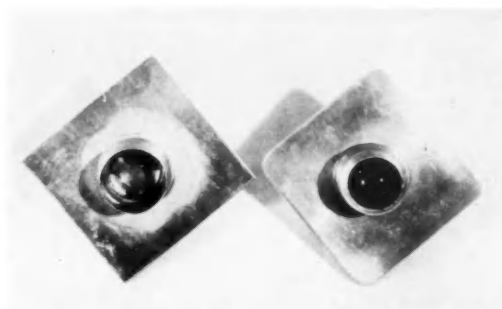
THE WELDING of aluminium and other non-ferrous metals without the use of heat or electricity is made possible by a process developed in the Research Laboratories of GEC. In this process, called *cold pressure welding*, the weld is produced by applying mechanical pressure to the lapped joint of the pieces to be joined, in such a way that their thickness at that point is reduced by a pre-determined amount.

Apart from the initial cleaning of the surfaces to be joined, no other major factors enter into the process. No special equipment is required to carry it out, with the exception of two punches formed to the plan shape of the required weld. These punches are attached, in line with each other, to the upper and lower members of a hand- or power-operated press; welds are produced by placing the parts to be joined between the punches and operating the press. The punches are thus forced towards each other, compressing the materials to be joined between them, and so producing the weld.

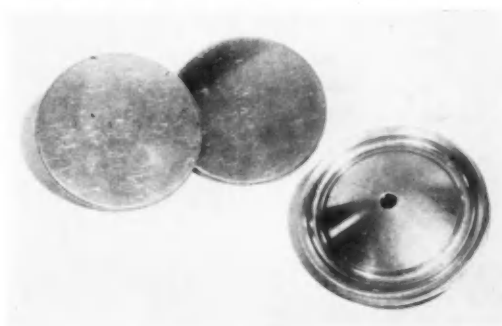
Where necessary, the weld can be made from one side only, leaving the other side clean and unmarked. In this case, only one punch is used, the other punch being replaced by a smooth, flat anvil.

Both spot and seam welds can be produced by the process. Spot welds are produced as outlined above, whilst seam welds can be produced in two ways; either by the same method, using ring punches of the same shape in plan as the weld required, or by using a pair of rollers which are arranged to run along the seam, one on each side of the materials to be joined.

At present, cold pressure welding can be used to make lap joints only. Attempts to adapt it for making butt joints have failed because the materials to be joined are not strong enough to transmit the



*Cup-to-plate joint which can be used for attaching handles or knobs, in products such as doors or kitchen utensils*



*Here, a ring weld provides an example of forming and welding carried out in one operation. The final shape, on right, is formed from the discs shown by taking advantage of the flow of the metal. This method is also suitable for sealing the ends of tubes*

required pressure to the joint faces without buckling.

The process was developed for welding the seam of aluminium tube produced from flat strip, but it is applicable in the manufacture of a very wide range of products in which a rapid means of joining aluminium is required. Indeed, it is difficult to say for what type of product it will be most useful, since a new approach to the design of the product is necessary, if full advantage is to be taken of its possibilities.

The process has been patented by The General Electric Co Ltd (Wembley, Middlesex), who are prepared to grant licences for its use at a low rate of royalty.

H. D. B.

## CANADA IN LONDON

At the Imperial Institute, contemporary display technique dramatises the story of Canadian life today—with emphasis on industry and a glance at industrial design

IS THERE A PLACE for modern display design in the Victorian twilight of the typical museum? One answer to this question can now be seen at the Imperial Institute,\* where the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission has transformed the Canadian Court with a new section built in Canada, knocked down for shipment, and re-erected in South Kensington. It fits as smoothly as a hand in a glove: and it looks very different from the glass-cased exhibits favoured by some of its neighbours. The effect, as *The Times* Museums Correspondent has said, "is more like that of a modern propagandist travelling exhibition than of a museum upon traditional lines." Some of the exhibits are actual objects but most of them are photographs. Almost all the photography is by the Canadian National Film Board, and there is not a

\* Opened in 1893 by Queen Victoria; established as a memorial of her Jubilee.

really bad picture in the whole area of the Court.

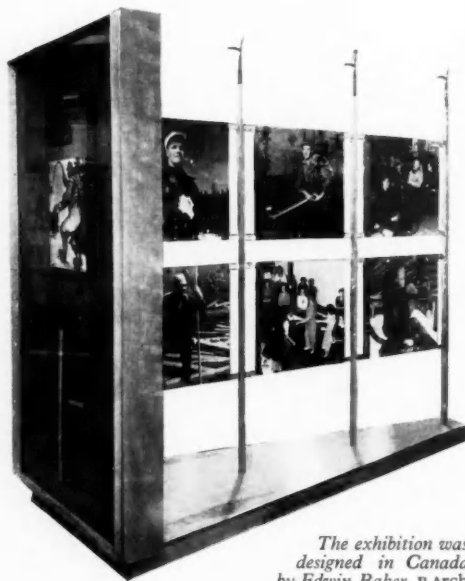
Photographs from the exhibition appear on the facing page. On this page are two views in the Court itself. Its design bridges the too-familiar gap between display and the things displayed, successfully and felicitously; in one section, for example, pike-poles—the two-pronged poles used by lumbermen to direct floating logs—form the upright supports for panels of photographs.

Display designers and museum officials alike must feel a professional interest in the new display. It is also of interest to anyone concerned with industry, since it brings home the fact that Canada today is concerned in every form of technology from nuclear fission to industrial design.

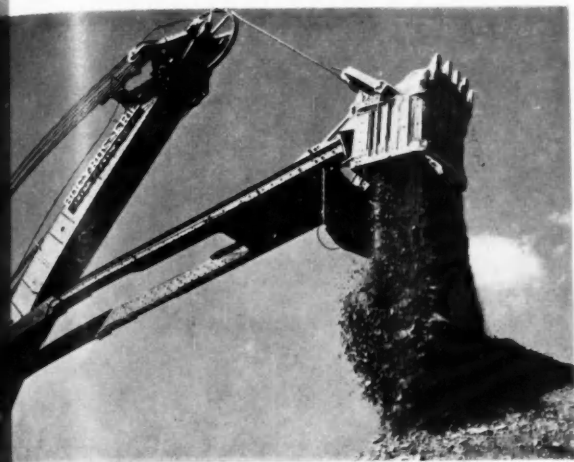
Three standard forms of lettering are used throughout; many of the captions are in white against a warm-coloured background of cellulosced birch panelling.



De-icing equipment of Canadian design makes the aircraft propeller an exhibit with a story, as well as a display feature, in the Canadian section of the Imperial Institute, London, SW



The exhibition was designed in Canada by Edwin Baker, B Arch



### The imported and the Canadian-built

Much of the machinery used in Canada is imported—most of it, like the Bucyrus-Erie excavator, from the United States. The Cockshutt tractor, on the other hand, is of Canadian design and manufacture, as is 25 per cent of all agricultural equipment used in the Dominion. A problem facing the British engineering manufacturer was summarised in this way in *Exports to Canada* (report of the UK Engineering Mission,



HMSO, 1949, 1s 6d): "From earliest youth Canadians are attuned to United States radio programmes, films, literature and way of life. Those who are to become engineers are taught from United States text books . . . United Kingdom manufacturers must adapt themselves to Canadian requirements and specifications based . . . on United States technical and dimensional standards and 'eye appeal.'"



### The international and the vernacular

The wood-carving is *Abstraction No 51*, by Alfred Cox—one of the younger generation of Canadian artists. It is international in style; there is nothing about it which says "Canada." No thought of Art troubled the minds of the rural craftsmen who built



these farm buildings in the West: but the contrast of black and white and the texture of the planks makes them pleasant to look at, and their character is distinctively North American—just as gold-grey stone suggests the Cotswolds, or warm red bricks, the Fens.



## GLASSWARE FROM THE 1951 STOCK LIST

THE HAND-BLOWN GLASSWARE industry, like many others, has for the last few years been operating under unnatural conditions, with a demand beyond its normal capacity to supply. In such conditions there is an obvious temptation to adopt a safety-first policy; new designs may not receive the same attention as in less well-established industries. Glass-making in Britain is an ancient industry, rightly proud of its long traditions; as a craft industry it cannot be expected to change centuries-old habits of thought.

Another factor which must militate strongly against innovations in design is the fact that, after some thousands of years of glass-making, no intrinsically new form in mouth-blown glassware is likely to be evolved. Shapes of domestic glass are thus limited by method of making, and in addition by the purposes for which glassware is used; unless there are drastic changes in one or other of these factors, changes in shape are likely to be subtle rather than sweeping. There is more scope for innovation in decoration than in form.

Meanwhile, a growing field for the designer is found in the manufacture of domestic glassware by automatic machinery. Heatproof ovenware and the products of such firms as Chance Brothers have received wide and well-merited publicity; we illustrate (opposite) table glass by a firm which has, so to speak, graduated from glass-bottle manufacture.



1: Goblet and glasses by Stevens and Williams Ltd

Machines make this glass, but men with imagination and technical knowledge are still needed to design it.

1 : a trio of glasses by Stevens and Williams, designed mainly for the highest grade of export market. The goblet has the solid, purposeful grace typical of the best English hand-made glassware, old or new. The whisky glass, with its deep-cut fingers, suggests the use for which it is intended.

2 : ashtray from Powell's Whitefriars Works, Wealdstone. The play of light on its surface is reflected in the bubbles, in which the light is imprisoned. The trapped or suspended bubble is a form of decoration employed only in extra-thick glass, since it would weaken less substantial pieces. It is well suited to glassware of this plain, massive shape.

3 : two examples of deep cutting by Thomas Webb and Corbett—a little reminiscent, perhaps, of opulent nineteenth-century cut glass. Designed by Irene Stevens, it has a formality which makes it suitable for great as well as lesser occasions.

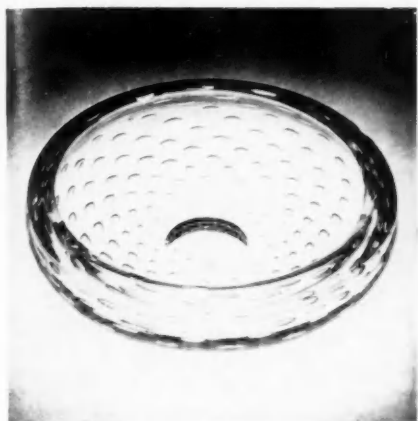
4 : soft-drink set; very successful in its pleasant blending of line- and disc-cut decoration—attractive, practical, durable; by Stuarts of Stourbridge.

5 : this Stevens and Williams whisky set, designed by Tom Jones, is robust yet light in the hand. It gives a clear view of the liquid contents and a good hand-hold; the general feeling is of masculine solidity.

The last two illustrations are of machine-made glass by UGB (United Glass Bottle Manufacturers Ltd) designed by A. H. Williamson.

6 : machine-moulded glasses, pleasing to eye, hand and lips. They are forerunners of a widening choice of UGB table glassware to supply a popular demand which hitherto has not been fully catered for.

7 : two well-proportioned examples of machine-moulded table glass from the same firm's *Sherdley* range.



2: Ashtray by James Powell and Sons Ltd



3: Decanter and tumbler by Thos. Webb and Corbett Ltd, Stourbridge



4: Soft-drink set by Stuart and Sons Ltd



5: Whisky set by Stevens and Williams Ltd, Brierley Hill

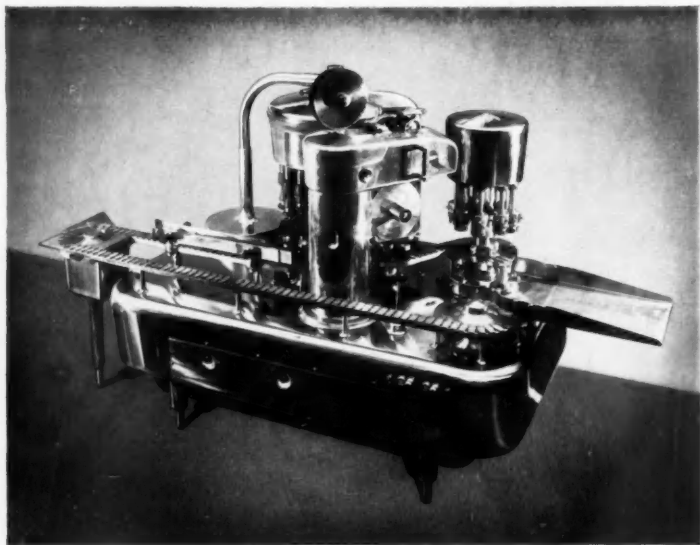


6: Wine-glasses; 7: water jug and tumbler; all by United Glass Bottle Manufacturers Ltd, London



## DESIGN IN THE DAIRY

New British machine  
interests  
buyers overseas



*The VSS bottle-filling machine has a reassuring air of efficiency which does not arise from any straining after effect on its designers' part but from an orderly grouping of components and extensive use of stainless steel and alloys*

DESPITE THEIR romantically rural-sounding name, dairies nowadays are Big Business; and the making of dairy equipment is an industry of some importance, not only supplying the vast mechanised dairies at home but contributing its share to Britain's export total.

Potential buyers overseas—notably dairies in Switzerland, Sweden and South Africa—have already been making enquiries about one of the newest products of this industry, the Udec VSS filler and capper, which is made by the UD Engineering Company Ltd.

This machine, as its name suggests, fills the bottles with milk and closes them with aluminium caps. As com-

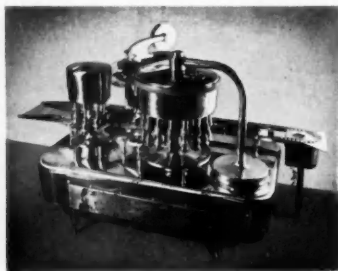
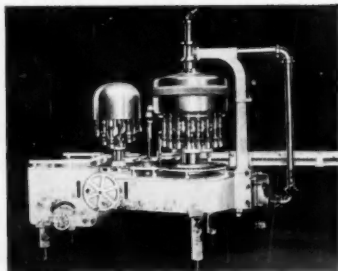
pared with earlier machines serving the same purpose, it shows notable advances in design, resulting from close co-operation in its development between technical and industrial designers. In this case the designers were Design Research Unit (Milner Gray, RDI, FSIA, and George Williams, MSIA), working with the manufacturers' own dairy technologists and engineers.

An established feature of the design of Udec machines is that the milk bottles, in their progress from stage to stage, move round in a smooth and continuous motion, in a single plane. This principle is retained in the latest model, but the designers have regrouped the chief components with the

object of making operation, servicing and cleansing as simple as possible, and at the same time improving appearance. Obvious changes are the replacement of sharp angles by curves and the use of stainless steel and alloys where enamelled surfaces were used before. There are other, less obvious, points of interest in the design of the VSS. For example, the cap-making press was originally mounted at 45 degrees, but it is now horizontal and the complete press unit swings outward for ease of servicing. The press tools which form the caps are visible through a transparent Perspex cover, so that the operation is under observation at all times.

The exhaustor fan (which empties the bottles of air before they are filled with milk) was originally a separate unit in its own casing, attached at one end of the machine; it has now been brought onto the surface of the main table. Here again the designers' aim was to provide better servicing, as well as less "bitty" appearance.

Instead of using cast iron for its lower platform structure, the VSS machine has a fabricated chassis frame which is covered by a stainless steel apron: a type of construction which facilitates cleaning and makes for low overall weight. Another good feature of this model is its high rate of output in relation to the small amount of floor-space which it occupies: it can fill up to 150 bottles a minute.



*Widely used, and still in production, the Udec bottling machine on left embodies the same basic mechanical principles as the newer model, though the two are very different in appearance (even when seen, as here, from approximately the same position) and in many important details of design and construction*

# DESIGN IN THE HOSPITAL

## Bedside lockers—and BSI recommendations

"A PROLONGED and detailed investigation of bedside lockers used in a large number of hospitals has shown that there is room for considerable improvement in the general level of the various types, and that more thought should be given to the selection of the correct type for a particular purpose."

In this comment by a Sub-committee of the British Standards Institution\* the need for better design in hospital furniture is clearly implied. Illustrations on this page, of items from the Trinal range, show how one designer has attempted to meet that need.

Development of this new range began shortly after the war, when Frank Mortimer, of Industrial Design and Development Ltd, approached the Middlesex Hospital to obtain users' views on a new type of bedside screen which he was designing. It soon became evident that the Middlesex Hos-

pital authorities—like the more recent Sub-committee—were dissatisfied with the design of available types of bedside locker; and indeed the requirements are not easy to meet. Lockers must be robust enough to withstand rough treatment, but for safety's sake they must not have sharp corners; for hygiene they must be smooth-surfaced; for convenience, they must be easily and quietly movable.

There are, moreover, some features of locker design on which different hospitals hold different opinions. For example, in the batch constructed to Mr Mortimer's designs for the Middlesex Hospital, drawers were specified, whereas in the later production models there are sliding tables, hinged flaps and compartments with shelves, but no drawers—in accordance with the Sub-committee's view that "compartments with doors are, in general, preferable to drawers. . . . Drawers are difficult to clean. They may be, and frequently are, used by patients for the disposal of rubbish and, thus needing frequent

cleaning, their primary disadvantage becomes more marked."

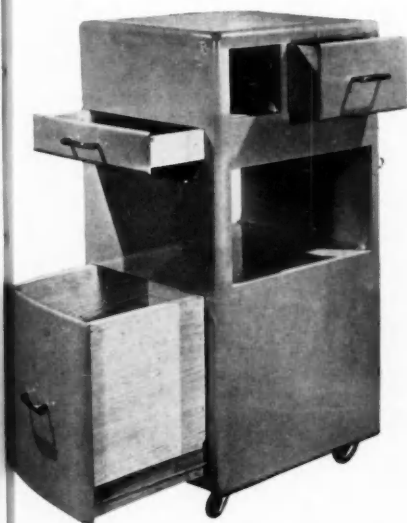
The Trinal design makes use of a rigid frame fitted with hollow panels which are bonded together by a core. This gives strength without excessive weight, smooth surfaces inside and out, and freedom from warping—an important consideration since high temperatures and humidities are unavoidable in some hospital wards. The makers of the lockers have had extensive experience of this type of construction in making flush doors.

Apart from a smaller locker for children's wards, there are six normal models. Depth and width are standardised for them all; there are two heights, for lockers with and without a sliding table. A higher model, for orthopaedic patients with limbs in plaster, is formed by fitting a seven-inch platform onto the base of one of the standard models.

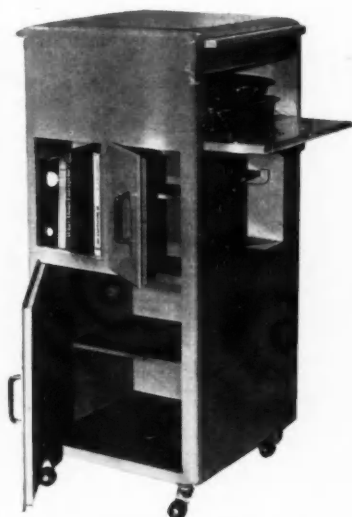
Other features of the Trinal design are: (a) the use of a new type of castor (Homa) which will not clog, (b) smooth Formica tops, resistant to acids and to burns, (c) towel rails that are strong enough to be used—as no doubt they will be used—as handles for moving the lockers, (d) complete reversibility; any locker can be used at either side of a bed.

Manufacturers of the lockers are Manor Joinery Works Ltd; distributors, The Merchant Trading Co Ltd. Designs are registered and a number of patents have been applied for.

\* Hospital Beds and Ward Equipment Sub-committee of Hospital Equipment Standards Advisory Committee.



Original design of locker for Middlesex Hospital, with drawers



Production models: left, with sliding table which can be used on either side; right, with top in halves (centrally hinged) and a mirror under each half



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Design and management

SIR: It was interesting to learn from your "Notebook" for November that the Harvard School of Business Administration has shown its lead in education for management by emphasising in its teaching the importance of sound design policies in industry.

In this country the pattern of management education for years ahead was laid down in the Urwick Report of 1947. From the design point of view a first glance at the syllabus is encouraging: the Final Examination contains the subject "Development and Design," whose purpose is "to provide an appreciation of the principles governing efficient and progressive development and design of the product." The syllabus which follows this statement, however, gives pride of place to research, which on the printed page has six lines to development's two and design's two. Against "Design" we find: "Organisation and Personnel. Product Efficiency. Consumer Demand. The Design in Industry Association. Design for Production. Quality Control."

This is clearly most inadequate. Such examination papers set under this syllabus as I have seen confirm that disproportionate attention is given to research and that the problem of design is not really considered. As things stand on this side of the Atlantic, it is unlikely that "a steady stream of young men will be poured into the upper reaches of industry, convinced as never before of the importance of the part that design should play. . . ."

Have we missed our opportunity in this direction, or has the Council of Industrial Design approached the newly formed British Institute of Management on this matter?

KENNETH L. BROOKFIELD, M Sc Tech  
Lecturer in Industrial Administration  
The Technical College  
Cardiff

● We share Mr Brookfield's view that management must be closely concerned with design—more closely than it has been in the past. Acceptance of this belief in technical, as well as art, schools is in itself an encouraging sign.

The Council of Industrial Design is already in close touch with the British

Institute of Management, and the publication of a booklet on "Design for Production" is among the joint activities which have been proposed. The Council and the Institute are also working out an appropriate section of the 1951 Festival Exhibition theme. EDITOR.

### Streamlining: fad or function

SIR: Your correspondence on streamlining is very interesting, and both Mr Van Doren and Messrs Scott and Ashford are obviously right in stating that in many cases form is controlled by method, but when Mr Wilkes states that "the refrigerator shown is a model of good design in that it apparently satisfies the manufacturer, the designer and the housewife in terms of construction, appearance and function," I think that due emphasis must be given to the word "apparently." It is clear why this particular refrigerator gained its curved top, but I doubt whether it does satisfy the average housewife nearly as well as would a model with flat top.

I suggest that she buys this refrigerator mainly because: (a) there is still a sellers' market in the best-known makes; (b) this one is available in the size she wants; and (c) she knows that as a refrigerator it is backed by a fine reputation gained over many years.

Having often to design schemes of kitchen fittings, I find that one of the items I now have to provide is a shelf to go over this new refrigerator with bearers, concave-shaped on the underside at back and front, so that the refrigerator top can be converted back to useful storage space (for which its low height suits it, and which the need for conserving space in the modern kitchen necessitates). In some instances this space above the refrigerator is converted into a cupboard; in every instance, the curved top has to be converted into a flat surface again to meet the housewife's needs. I suggest that in this respect this refrigerator is *not* functional.

Now let us move to the subject of cars. We all know the sound arguments in favour of some streamlining, but when it comes to comfort (and that, to the average user in Great Britain, is possibly a more important function than very high speed), I suggest that

some of the latest versions have much to learn from their predecessors. I have been running a 1946 X and a very nice car it was. At the time I obtained delivery of it I ordered another to succeed it, and that was delivered a couple of months ago. This new model is a stunning car; it stuns you when you get in and it stuns you when you get out. It has some improvements over the 1946 model (which was basically a pre-war car) but it also has defects—especially lack of head-room and a complete lack of relation between side elevation and plan. This gives the impression that wherever the designer of the elevation put a doorway, the designer of the plan nullified his efforts by blocking the opening with a seat.

The unfortunate back-seat passenger, on entry, has to withdraw nearly to the centre of the car before the door is slammed; otherwise he is struck on the hip by an arm-rest which is attached to the door; whilst, if somebody opens the door unexpectedly, he is yanked out with his elbow neatly fitted to the arm-rest. To make this more probable . . . the handles of the front door have to be pushed down to open and up to lock, whilst those of the rear door have to be pushed up to open and down to lock.

It is only possible to emerge from the front door head first, whilst from the back door one comes out bottom first. I shall probably solve this problem by Perspex labels which will have, on the front door, "Head—down" and on the back door, "Bottom—up."

I know *why* the doors only open to about 60°: it is due to the voluptuous curves of the car sides—but oh, how much nicer the old one was, where the doors opened to right angles, or perhaps slightly more, and the rear door was hinged from the rear post instead of the centre pillar.

Arguments can be used for and against steps, but this car has been reduced in height so much that the floor, instead of being on top of the main girder, is suspended from it, so that I now sit inside a dustpan which can only be cleaned out by using a vacuum cleaner. . . .

It may be asked, why did I buy it? The answer is: I ordered it three years ago and the model has been changed since. I bought it for the same reason that the lady buys the streamlined refrigerator, because there is still a sellers' market in both.

Northwood, Middx. EDWARD H. PINTO

● In next month's issue Mr Van Doren will comment on this letter and previous correspondence aroused by his article in DESIGN (No 10). EDITOR.





## Shall we start with this?

The simplest tool of all, yet in the hands of a skilled typographer one with which he can try out, and develop or reject, each idea as it occurs to him. For this advertisement he had four ideas - so we used them all.

EDWARD MORTIMER LIMITED  
REGENT STREET • HALIFAX

**EM**

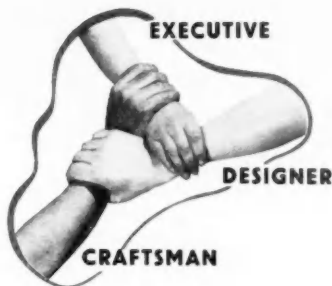


## it's clean and sharp

If this is said of a piece of printing it is really the nicest compliment. If it is true it means that everyone concerned has done his job carefully and well and what could be more satisfying than that in printing or any other industry?

EDWARD MORTIMER LIMITED  
PRINTERS AT REGENT STREET • HALIFAX

**EM**



## 3 RIGHT HANDS

Partners in industry -  
a team of experts working  
together to produce a good job  
economically  
and on time

EDWARD MORTIMER LIMITED  
PRINTERS AT REGENT STREET • HALIFAX

**EM**

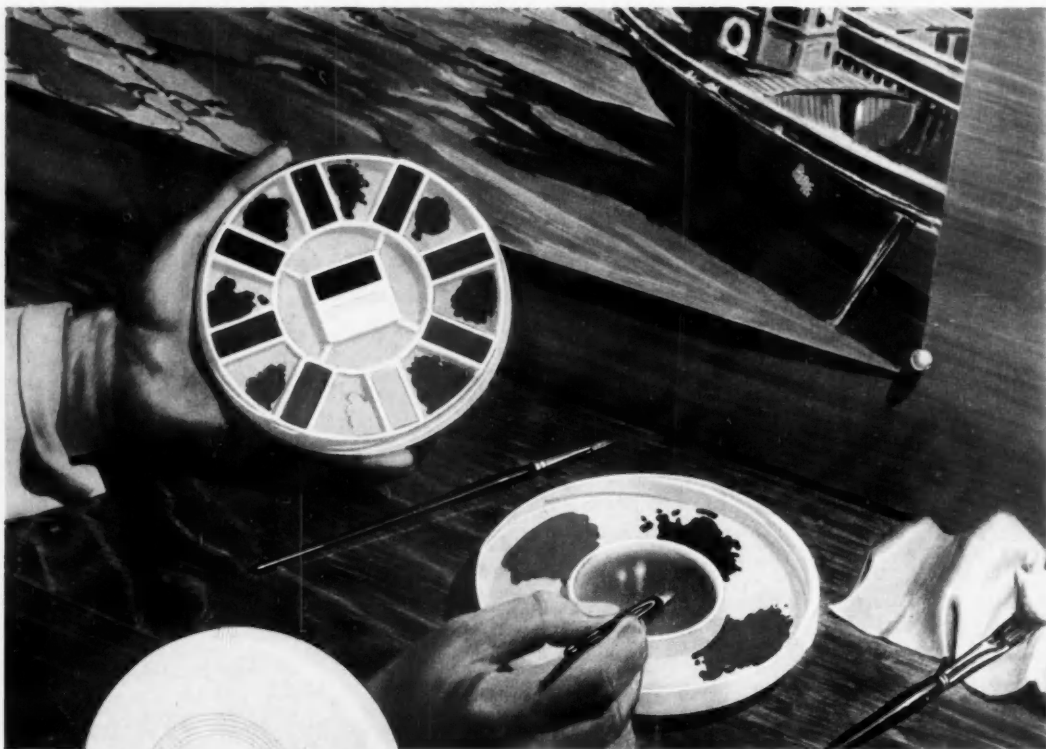


## A MASTERPIECE

Nowadays, unfortunately, one cannot assume that a 'Master' of a particular trade is capable of producing a masterpiece but there are many firms who still take pride in making goods of the highest quality and with these it is a pleasure to do business.

**EM**

EDWARD MORTIMER LIMITED  
PRINTERS AT REGENT STREET • HALIFAX



*This Winsor and Newton Ostwald Circle colour box sets a new standard in paint box design. The 'circle' theme is to conform to the theory of the Ostwald colour system in which the colours are arranged chromatically equidistant. The box is moulded in Beetle by Illingworths (Plastics) Ltd. Note how the radial divisions between the paint containers and palettes form natural strengthening ribs.*

Containers made from Beetle and Scarab are strong and rigid. They have clean-flowing contours, pleasantly-textured surfaces; provide perfect closures and above all, unlimited colour possibilities.

Beetle offers white tones and a wide choice of translucent, semi-translucent and opaque colours, from the pure primaries to the softest of pastel shades. Economical Scarab is also now available in a new range of attractive pastel shades.

Write for Technical Leaflets or call in the B.I.P. Technical Service to co-operate with your designer and help in choosing the right material to ensure the best results.

*Beetle and Scarab Standard Moulding Powders conform to BS1322.*

# BEETLE AND SCARAB

AMINOPLASTIC MOULDING POWDERS

Distributed by **THE BEETLE PRODUCTS CO. LTD.**, 1 Argyll Street, London, W.1

*'BEETLE' is a trade mark registered in Great Britain and in most countries of the world.*



## DESIGN OVERSEAS

### Better lighting for instrument dials

OLD-FASHIONED switchboard instruments were often illuminated by individual lamps suspended in front of them on swan-neck fittings; this system produced dazzling reflections from the meter glasses and from the polished slate panels on which the instruments were usually mounted.

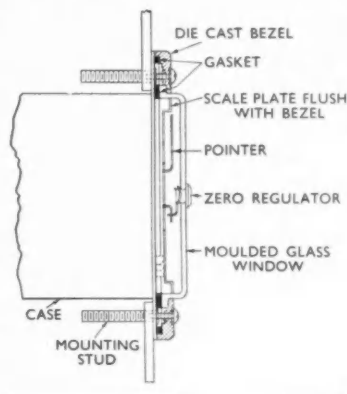
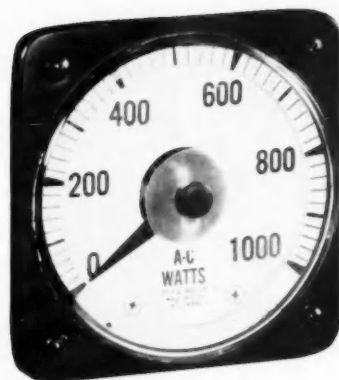
In recent years the problem has been approached in several different ways, such as by setting the scale back in the meter case and illuminating it by small low-voltage bulbs between the scale and the case; by letting in light through slots in the side of the meter case; or by having a translucent scale with one or more bulbs arranged behind it. A disadvantage of all these methods is that they do not illuminate the scale evenly, replacement of bulbs is awkward, and the heat generated inside the instrument is undesirable.

Illustrated here is a neat design by the (American) General Electric Company, designed to make the scales perfectly readable while using ordinary

room lighting. The sectioned drawing shows that the scale, instead of being sunk deep in the case as hitherto, has been brought right forward to the plane of the panel and covered by a projecting moulded glass cap, held in place by a shallow bezel. Unobstructed illumination of the scale is thus permitted from any angle and the meter can be easily read by ordinary room lighting. A further advantage is that the absence of dark shadows in and around the case prevents excessive brightness-contrasts which might cause eye-fatigue among users.

—Summarised from "Illumination of Switchboard Instrument Scales," by H. S. Edgerley and R. M. Rowell, in *General Electric Review*, New York, October 1949.

The sectioned diagram of the new instrument shows how the glass window projects beyond the bezel, bringing the scale forward to the plane of the switchboard panel in which it would normally be mounted

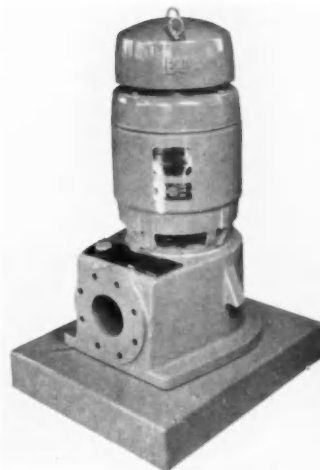


### Redesigned pump is more compact and more efficient

IN REDESIGNING a deep well electric pump for the Byron Jackson Company, Henry Dreyfuss achieved greater compactness as well as improved performance. The pump consists of a standard electric motor mounted on a casting which houses turbine shaft bearing and discharge head. The moving parts were formerly lubricated from an oil storage tank hung on the outside of the unit, which, owing to its exposure to widely varying temperatures, resulted in variations in the rate of flow of the oil.

In the redesign, the oil storage has been incorporated in the base casting, where it is kept at a constant temperature by running the discharge water through it. Both the top motor cap and base were redesigned as sand-castings, with no additional cost to the manufacturer.

The pump was described in *Machine Design*, September 1949; it is also illustrated in *US Industrial Design* '49-'50 (DESIGN, No. 13, p. 32).



Improved appearance and greater compactness of the redesigned deep well electric pump, right, are evident by comparison with the older model, left



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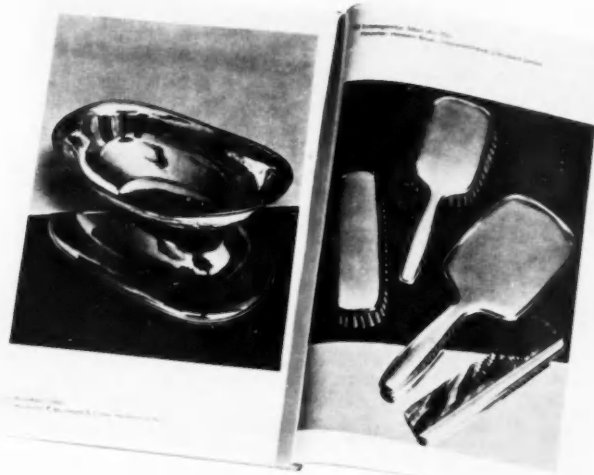
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## Post-war German design on show

A return to the design standards of pre-Nazi Germany—with little suggestion of Hitler's "Blood and Soil" style—characterised a recent exhibition of German industrial design in Stuttgart.

The exhibition, held during December and January, was arranged by the Württemberg Landesgewerbeamt (the regional body concerned with industrial production). Under the title of *Wie Wohnen*, it brought together examples of current production for the home, including building, furniture, pottery, clocks, metal tableware and small household goods. Pottery, glass and cutlery were well represented, the forms being generally simple and well-balanced, with little ornamentation. Some of them were the work of pre-war designers; Bauhaus shapes are being repeated.

The exhibition was organised by means of a competition, for which well over 1000 entries were received. Its aim was to find goods suitable for the new ways of living that now face the mass of German people. Some very original solutions were presented to the selection board, but only a few of these were suitable for industrial production: some of them have now gone into production. The competition, according to the chairman of the selection board, Professor Schneck, confirmed his opinion that furniture that is to be mass-produced cannot be designed on paper, but must be worked out in co-operation with the manufacturer. (Unfortunately the very few examples of mass-produced furniture that were shown are not illustrated in the catalogue.) There have been many experiments with plywood furniture, and a number of radio cabinets and chairs have been made in this material.



*The catalogue of the Stuttgart exhibition shows a high standard of product design—and photography*

## US board to advise on choice of type-faces

America now has a National Board to advise printers and print-users on the suitability of type-faces for various purposes. This Board (which existed before the war, but only resumed its activity late in 1949) is a voluntary body, consisting of representatives of the American Institute of Graphic Arts and of various associations concerned with advertising and printing. From about 200 types already submitted, 69 have been approved by the Board and recommended for advertising use. They include many of the classics, as well as a few recent American designs which are

not yet known in the United Kingdom.

The expert opinions of users of type are most likely to be helpful if they are expressed *before* the designs are put into production. Realising this, the Board has invited manufacturers to submit "original designs for new types" for its criticism and suggestions in future, as well as types already in production.

—Summarised from a report in *The American Printer*, New York, December 1949 (which includes a list of the 69 recommended type-faces)

## Foreign taste influences Swedish potters

The influence of German taste on Swedish pottery design is discussed by Willy Rotzler in a commentary on a recent exhibition in Zurich called "Swedish Work Today." Pre-war Swedish pottery was of a very high standard indeed and the phrase "Swedish grace" became almost proverbial. This pottery was produced with the definite object of export to the German market and was therefore directly influenced by the taste of people whose judgment was in part formed by the Deutscher Werkbund. These people are no longer customers, and Mr Rotzler contends that the buyers

of today from other nations are leading Swedish export products away from their former sureness. This is particularly noticeable in the ceramics being produced today by "the big production studios," rather than the individual craftsmen.

There is some compensation for present indecision in the signs of a new style, liberated from the traditional axial quality given by the use of the potter's wheel.

—Summarised from "New Swedish Ceramics," by Willy Rotzler, in *Werk*, Winterthur, Switzerland, December 1949.



*Small bowl in stoneware by AB Gustavbergs Fabriker, Sweden (from Werk)*



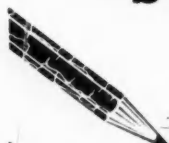
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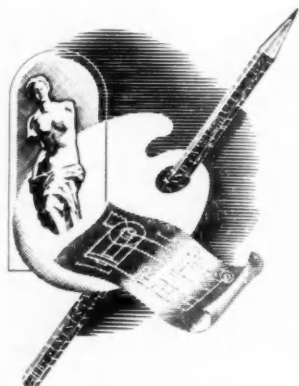


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## Industrial Design Abstracts

### Arts and crafts in Amsterdam [A]

At the Arts and Crafts School in Amsterdam, skilled craft knowledge and the production of a higher standard in industry are considered of first importance. A main object of the school is the training of industrial consultants and advisers. The methods by which the school's curriculum is arranged and the workshops are run are described.

*Forum*, Amsterdam, No. 9, 1949.

### American china and glass [A]

1: Dark rich reds, blues, browns and greens are coming to the fore as colours for chinaware, with flamboyant floral motifs and also metallic glazes. There is growing co-operation between glass and pottery manufacturers in bringing out matching designs, even to the extent of developing crystal with a pottery base matching the dinnerware. Glass plates are becoming increasingly popular. In glassware shapes, chunkiness is the outstanding characteristic.

*Crockery & Glass Journal*, East Stroudsburg, Pa., December 1949.

2: The Southern Californian ceramics industry, though established only 15 years, has already achieved a nationwide influence. Most of the ware is very highly coloured. Old-fashioned gingham or organdie tablecloth patterns are among the motifs used for plates.

*Saturday Evening Post*, Philadelphia, 19 November 1949.

### Bus and coach seats [A]

Much has been done by the designers of bus and coach seats to eliminate the causes of bodily discomfort and fatigue in road travel. Recent developments noted in a review of designs by leading manufacturers include seats with press-button-controlled adjustability for each passenger, and adjustable head-rests; a driver's seat which can be adjusted vertically and horizontally by turning a knob at the side; and seats with hinged backs and detachable cushions.

*Bus & Coach*, December 1949.

### Human problems of work design [A]

In a recent discussion on "Human problems in the design of machinery and working methods" the British Association drew attention to the importance of good work design as a factor in making jobs easier for both healthy and disabled workers and in preventing injuries. It was pointed out that whereas the shape and size of hand tools had

been gradually evolved through generations of use, machine-tool users cannot easily take part in their design, and technical advances tend to hide the fact that correctly designed equipment would speed production even more. Also, tools are often chosen by appearance rather than by function. The Cockpit Layout Committee of the RAF had approached these problems of work design for the instrumentation and controls of aircraft.

*Nature*, 10 December 1949. [Since the discussion referred to above, it has been reported (*The Times*, 6 January 1950) that cockpit controls in all new machines for the RAF will be of standard shapes so that the pilot can identify the function of any knob by its shape.]

### Modern basket-work [A]

Interest in the ancient handcraft of basket-work has been revived through the efforts of French and Dutch designers who are using it increasingly for furniture and tableware. The most successful designs are those based on traditional forms and patterns; the combination of metal or plastic reinforcement with basket-work tends to mar the characteristic charm of this material.

*Art & Decoration*, Paris, No. 15.

### Nameplates [A]

Among the several types of standards initiated by the engineering departments of Link-Belt Company are standards for nameplates which must be of uniform design throughout their many manufacturing plants. These designs are brought to their final form by a group composed of representatives of the advertising and legal departments and headed by the chief engineer. In this way trade mark and patent references and engineering requirements are co-ordinated with the needs of general suitability, good appearance and a uniform colour scheme.

*Standardization*, New York, November 1949.

### Tombstones today [A]

1: Funeral pomp and decorations, though less elaborate than in former years, are still an abundant source of popular art, writes Barbara Jones. With those who seek to avoid extravagant designs, a dull, horizontal screen is the most popular form of tombstone, but less anaemic monuments make full use of the traditional symbols such as urns, weeping willows, doves, extin-

guished torches, broken trees and columns or the lyre with broken strings. Among ornaments for the grave which need no attention, the immortelles, everlasting wreaths of a white substance, are still fashionable, though their popularity varies in different parts of the country.

*Architectural Review*, December 1949.

2: Arno Malinowski deplores the low standard in design of modern headstones. He suggests that the Danish sculptors' competition in headstone design held in 1948 should become an annual event. A small model cemetery where well-designed stones only were permitted might be of value. These measures might in the end influence public taste which is very naturally bound by tradition.

*Dansk Kunsthaandvaerk*, Copenhagen, No. 12, 1949.

### Washing at home [P]

Miss Joy Houghton, of the North Thames Gas Board, in a paper on home laundry methods, comments on the design of washing equipment. Wash boilers fulfil their function well, but their appearance could be improved. An appliance should have plain lines, rounded corners, no protuberances such as injectors, and should fit under a draining board for storage. Improvements are also required in emptying, agitating and lighting. Wringers are too clumsy, with too many ledges: a lighter, simpler type is needed, capable of storage by folding down inside the machine, with good stability while wringing, but easily movable.

*Washing at Home*. Paper read to the London & Southern Junior Gas Association, 9 December 1949.

### Weighing in Britain and USA [A]

C. W. Thomas, head of Geo. Driver & Co, considers British automatic weighing machines unrivalled even by American machines. In the USA, the Weights and Measures regulations are not severe, and, as the American packer's aim is to secure higher production speeds, the machines are set to give a margin over weight which would be unacceptable in this country. Here the high and rigid standards set by the Board of Trade have probably proved the most powerful impetus towards improvement of design, coupled with the fact that British users set accuracy above speed in weighing and packing.

*The Ironmonger's Weekly*, 22 December 1949.

The letter appearing in the title of each abstract indicates the form of the publication from which that abstract is taken: [A] article or articles in a periodical; [B] book; [P] pamphlet; [S] supplement or special number. Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated. All publications mentioned above can be seen in the Library of the Council of Industrial Design.

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## NOTEBOOK

### Printing on show

DESIGN IN PRINTING is a theme common to three current or impending exhibitions. The Monotype Corporation is showing 120 "before and after" examples of redesign; the British Federation of Master Printers has launched a travelling exhibition called "Putting it in Print"; and on 3 March "Design in Business Printing" will open at Murray House.

The Monotype exhibition is compact and highly selective, with the emphasis on typographical design. It is open until 28 February at 54 Fetter Lane, London EC4; after that date, Mrs Beatrice Warde will take the cream of the collection to the United States, and it will be shown in several American cities. Designers whose work is represented in the exhibition attended a preview on 12 January at which an informal talk was given by J. P. Thorp, lively veteran of typography and author—31 years ago—of *Printing for Business*, a pioneer textbook. Of the design of printed matter, he said: "Next to building houses, I think this is about as good a job as one can find."

The "Putting it in Print" exhibition by the Federation is only incidentally concerned with design, and is intended to encourage young people to enter the printing industry: it gives a summary

in visual form of the whole story of printing—its history, technicalities, cultural and economic importance. Many readers of *DESIGN* will find the presentation of this show as interesting as its contents (and they are very interesting). The exhibits are mostly mounted on screens. There are eighteen of these, each four feet square; with their supporting poles, cast metal bases and necessary packing material they weigh less than a ton and can be packed into one motor-van. Another commendable feature of the design of this exhibition (by Cockade Ltd) is that the backgrounds are backgrounds; they are well-groomed but unobtrusive. "Putting it in Print" is touring the country under the auspices of local Master Printers' Alliances and Associations.

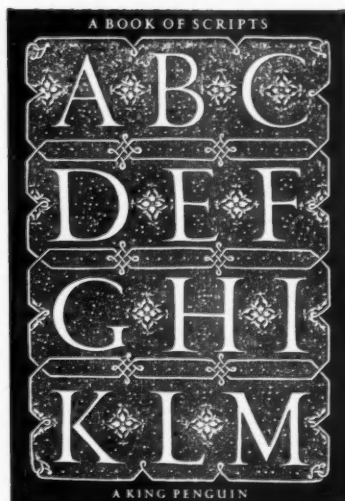
"Design in Business Printing," organised jointly by the Federation and the Council of Industrial Design, opens at Murray House, Vandon Passage, Petty France, SW1, on 3 March, and will be open there daily until 6 April; afterwards it, too, will go on tour. Likely exhibits range from wine-lists to staff magazines, from showcards to invitation cards. Walter Lewis, MA, former Printer to the University of Cambridge, is chairman of the selection committee.

### New publications

Printing design is represented among new books also. *The Typographic Arts* by Stanley Morison (Sylvan Press, 21s) reprints two of Mr Morison's scholarly papers and illustrates them with a number of plates, of interest to all who are concerned with the history of printing.

*A Book of Scripts* is an addition to the King Penguin series. It gives a brief history of handwriting and inevitably touches on the history of type-design also. Its authoritative text, by Alfred Fairbank, and its 64 plates make this book remarkably good value at 3s.

*Outline*, by the late Paul Nash (Faber, 30s), consists of an unfinished autobiography, extracts from letters, and selected essays. In the words of Herbert Read, its editor, *Outline* shows "the considerable talent for writing which Paul Nash possessed." Although there is a passing reference to Nash's textile designs, this could not be called a book about industrial design; yet many designers will find it interesting for its clear account of the growth of an



Cover of *A Book of Scripts*, adapted by Jan Tschichold from a design by Juan de Yciar, 1547

artist's powers and his own confidence in them. It gives, too, a vivid picture of artistic life in London before 1914.

*Style in Costume* by James Laver (Oxford University Press, 6s) shows in paired pictures, with very brief text, how styles in costume have run parallel to styles in architecture and decoration, from the pre-Christian era to the present century.

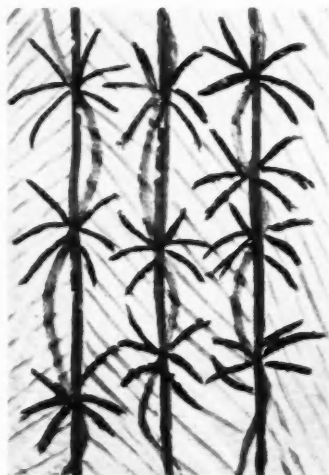
A new publication of a very different kind, but also relying on plentiful illustrations with a minimum of words, is *Design for Vitreous Enamelling*, prepared by the Vitreous Enamellers' Association with the co-operation of the Council of Industrial Design. This is a practical booklet, with contrasted diagrams of right and wrong methods, for designers who are not wholly familiar with the technique of enamelling. Copies are available, price 2s, from the Association (21 Waterloo Street, Birmingham 2).

Among periodicals, No 1 of *The Architectural Times* (36 Great Smith Street, SW1; 5s) sets a high standard of presentation—but it enters, surely, an already crowded field.

### Two exhibitions

An exhibition at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester (19 April to 13 May) will introduce to this country some of the best contemporary Norwegian textiles, ceramics, glass, silver, enamels and furniture. It is sponsored by the Norwegian Association of Applied Art, and may subsequently tour Britain.

*continued overleaf*



Pattern design by a ten-year-old school-child; from a recent exhibition at the DIA, reported overleaf

The Design and Industries Association recently staged in London a small exhibition of "Children's Work in Design," arranged by the Society for Education in Art. Most of the exhibits came from London County Council schools, reflecting the methods of teaching originally evolved by Marion Richardson. Most of these paintings and lino-cuts by young children showed a strong sense of colour, and some (though perhaps not so many) of pattern. There were a few among them that might well have served as the starting-point for printed textile designs.

#### Design in display

At some stage or other in the production of most factory-made articles the use of iron or steel is involved. To bring this fact home to the public the British Iron and Steel Federation is to display a variety of consumer goods, in which these metals have played a part, on its stand at the Ideal Home Exhibition. To ensure that they are, moreover, consumer goods of good design it is planned that they shall all be selected from the 1951 Stock List compiled by the Council of Industrial Design. Although it has been publicised chiefly in connection with the 1951 Festival, the Stock List is also proving useful to industry in a variety of other ways.

## DESIGN

#### EDITORIAL ADDRESS

See page 1

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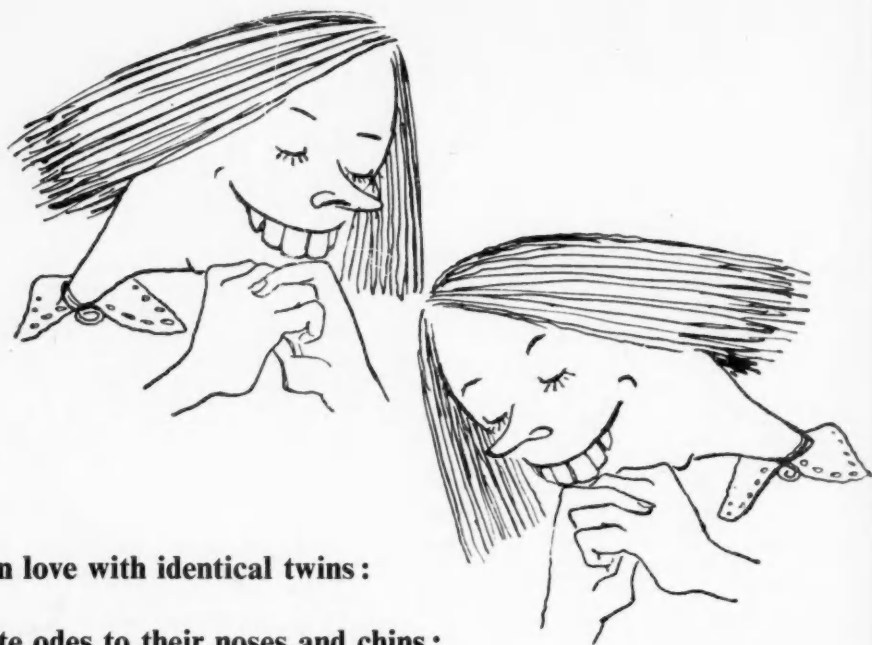
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DESIGN is published for the Council of Industrial Design, Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW1 (Scottish Committee : 95 Bothwell Street, Glasgow C2) by His Majesty's Stationery Office, and printed in Great Britain by Benham and Company Limited, Colchester.

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